

What is claimed is:

1. A method for fulfilling a file-sharing query, comprising:
transmitting a client-side application to a file-sharing user having a shared file ,
the client-side application for generating metadata corresponding to the shared file;
receiving and storing the metadata from the file-sharing user;
providing a user interface (UI) to a querying user, the UI for entering a query to a
metadata repository;
receiving a query from the querying user via the UI, the shared file satisfying the
query based on the stored metadata; and
transmitting an identification of the shared file to the querying user.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
periodically receiving and storing updated metadata from the client-side
application.
3. The method of claim 1, said client-side application generating the metadata using
an abstracting program.
4. The method of claim 1, said UI comprising a proprietary UI of the metadata
repository.
5. The method of claim 1, said transmitting an identification further comprising:

transmitting a hyperlink to the querying user in response to the query, wherein a selection of the hyperlink by the querying user initiates a transmission of the shared file from the file-sharing user to the querying user.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
storing the shared file locally based on a characteristic of the shared file.
7. The method of claim 6, said transmitting an identification further comprising:
transmitting a hyperlink to the querying user in response to the query, wherein a selection of the hyperlink by the querying user initiates a transmission of the shared file from the metadata repository to the querying user.
8. The method of claim 6, the characteristic comprising a threshold popularity of the shared file.
9. The method of claim 6, wherein the metadata is transmitted to at least one other metadata repository for storage and the shared file is not transmitted to any other metadata repository for storage.
10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving updated metadata for storage; and
transmitting the updated metadata to at least one other associated metadata repository to facilitate queries directed to the at least one other associated metadata repository.

11. The method of claim 10, said transmitting the updated metadata further comprising:
transmitting the updated metadata in a parallel, pairwise protocol with the at least one other metadata repository.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
periodically receiving updated metadata from a second metadata repository.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing a payment to the file-sharing user for the shared file transmitted to the querying user.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:
receiving a payment from the querying user for the shared file.

15. A method for facilitating file-sharing queries, comprising:
receiving metadata files from a plurality of file-sharing users, the metadata files corresponding to shared files;
storing the metadata locally at a first metadata repository to facilitate search queries from querying users received by the first metadata repository;
uploading a shared file from a file-sharing user for local storage on a metadata repository when a plurality of search requests for the shared file exceed a predetermined threshold; and

periodically synchronizing stored metadata with a second metadata repository for facilitating queries from querying users received by the first and second metadata repositories.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the queries received by the metadata repository are not transmitted to the second metadata repository and queries received by the second metadata repository are not transmitted to the first metadata repository.

17. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
transmitting a client-side application to a file-sharing user having the shared file,
the client-side application for generating metadata corresponding to the shared file.

18. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
receiving a query from a querying user; and
transmitting an identification of a shared file satisfying the query to the querying user.

19. A method for operating an asymmetric data sharing network, comprising:
establishing at least two classes of users that interact with a metadata repository over a network, the at least two classes including a sharing class that primarily provides data and a searching class that primarily searches for data;
receiving metadata identifying a shared file from a user in the sharing class; and
receiving a query from a user in the searching class, the metadata satisfying the query; and

providing an identification of the shared file to the user in the searching class.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

uploading the shared file from the user in the sharing class for distribution to users in the searching class when the shared file satisfies a predetermined condition.